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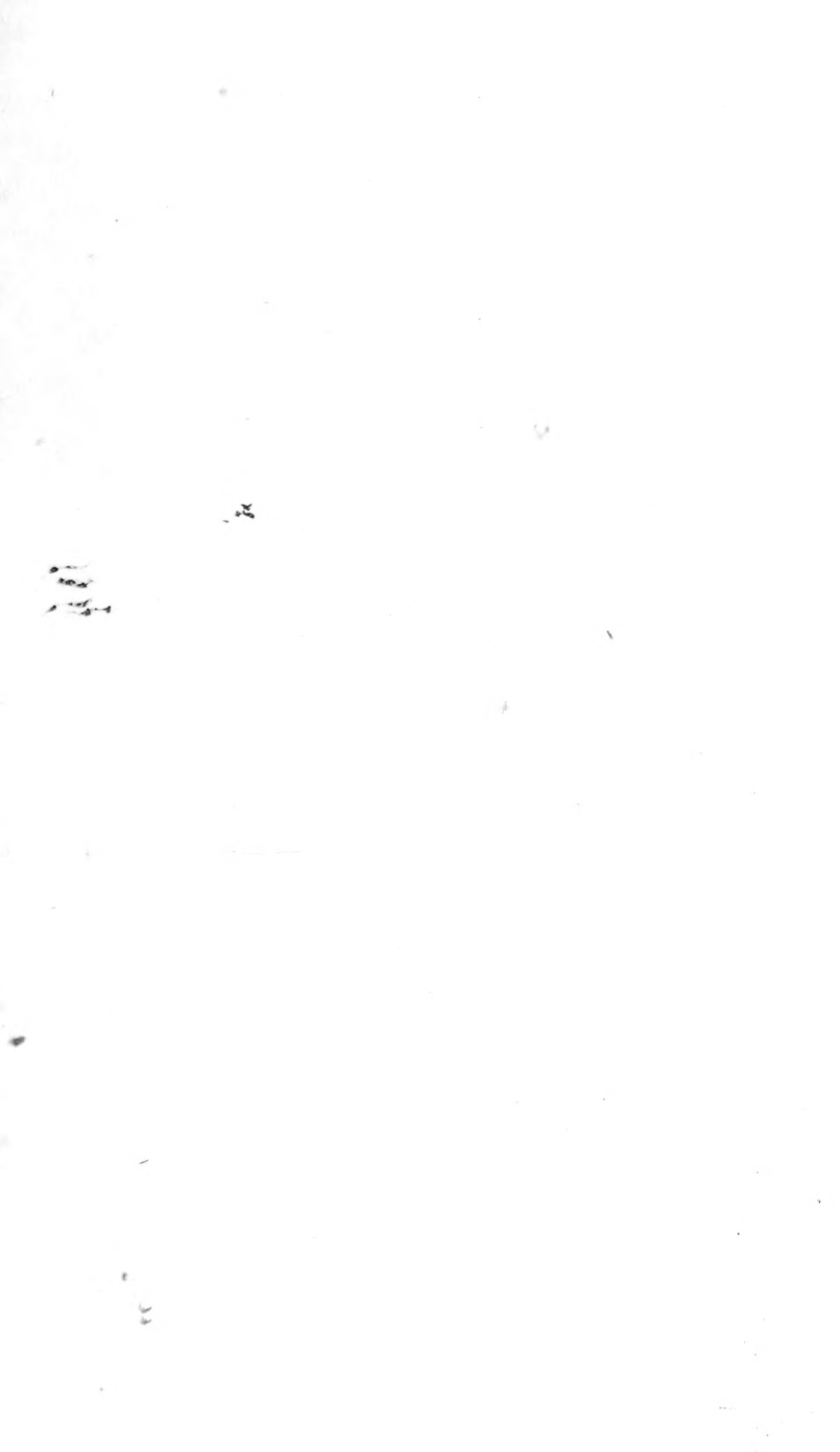
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THE
PLEASURES OF SOCIETY.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY R. GILBERT,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

THE
PLEASURES OF SOCIETY;

A POEM.

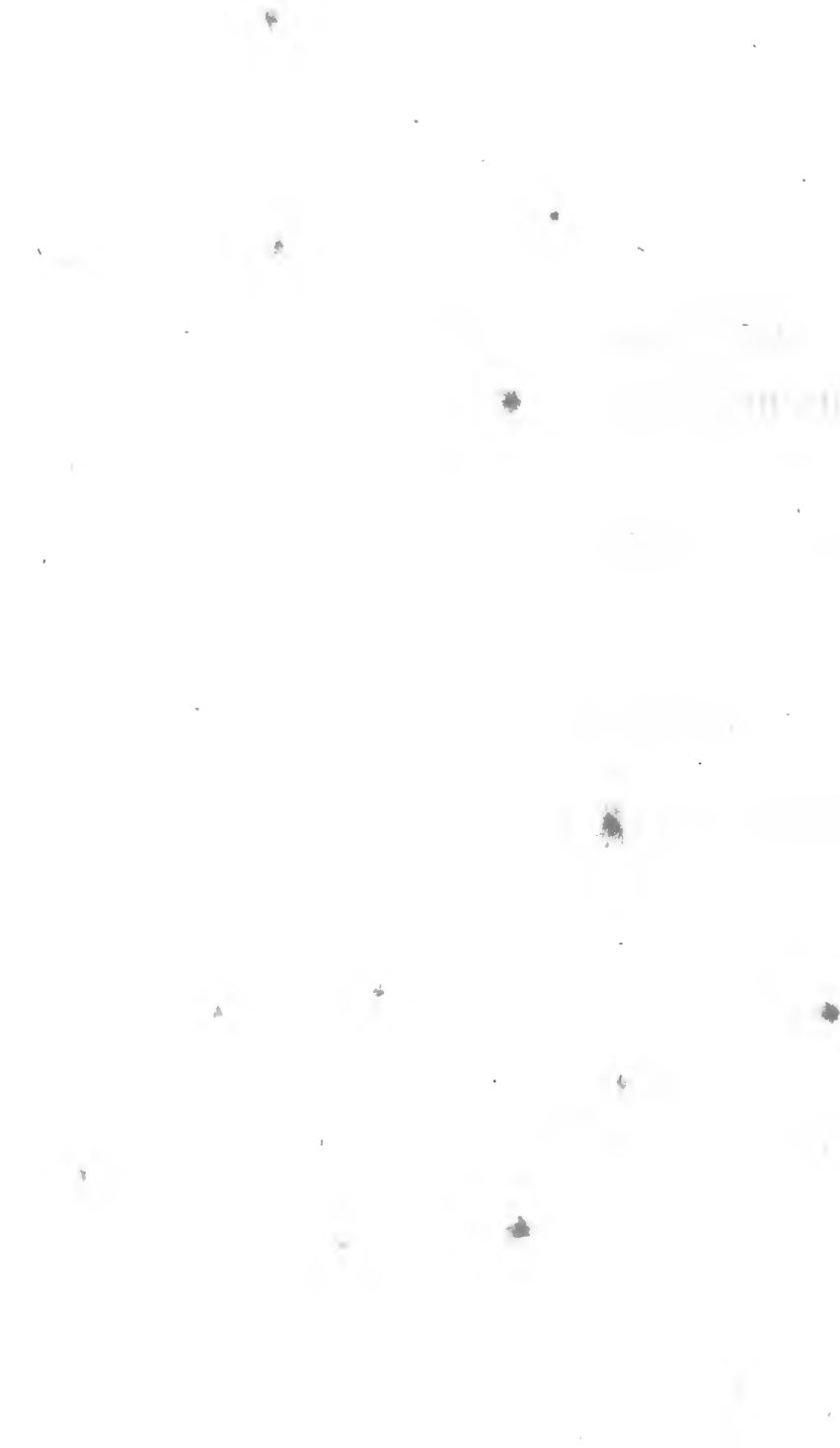


“ Society, friendship, and love,
Divinely bestowed upon man.”

COWPER.



LONDON:
PRINTED FOR C. AND J. RIVINGTON,
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD,
AND WATERLOO-PLACE, PALL-MALL.
1824.



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TO THE
RIGHT HON. GEORGE CANNING, M.P.

His Majesty's
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY OF STATE

FOR THE
FOREIGN DEPARTMENT,
&c. &c. &c.

IN TESTIMONY OF SINCERE RESPECT FOR HIS PUBLIC AND
PRIVATE VIRTUES AND TALENTS,

THESE LINES
ARE HUMBLY INSCRIBED BY
THE AUTHOR.

824038



CONTENTS.

Introduction—social pleasures of very young children—of school-boys—recollection of the same in advanced life—pleasures of youth in College—his studies encouraged, and his exertions animated by the hope of praise—the lover—even in solitude, looks forward to the enjoyment of social pleasures—domestic love and happiness—in joy and affliction—from children—the encouragement of domestic feeling directs the heart to the love of mankind—removes national prejudices—social liberty—the mind enlarged by social intercourse in foreign countries—return to home—its pleasures—social parties in winter—family scenes—convivial hospitality—occasional retirement increases our desire for society—the social feeling prevails in all climes—in savage life—but more so in refined states—exemplified in the customs of ancient Greece—gives courage in danger—contrasted with the horrors of solitude—the prisoner—the ship-wrecked seaman

CONTENTS.

—monastic life—contrary to the spirit of the Gospel—the nun—
active benevolence of the “*Sœurs de Charité*,” at Barcelona, du-
ring the plague—man, being formed in the image of God, is
taught to imitate his attributes of benevolence, mercy, &c.—
many social virtues taught by adversity—the Lord’s Prayer—
the friendship of our Saviour for Lazarus—his affection for his
mother displayed on the cross—error and wickedness of men in
converting love for their brethren into hatred and war—intro-
duced by the fall of our first parents—social worship—a sabbath
in Iceland—consolation on a death-bed from the offices of friend-
ship—its contrast—termination of all earthly existence—union
of relatives and friends, in the regions of the blessed—con-
clusion.

THE
PLEASURES OF SOCIETY.

O'ER the wide earth Time's varied ages go,
Year after year, like ocean's restless flow.
We, wandering children, cast a curious eye
O'er all that glitters in the starry sky ;
Ocean and earth, in all their state, survey,
Ourselves an awful miracle, as they !
Ask for what end, like shadows, we appear,
Poor, toiling pilgrims, through the passing year.
If to ourselves we turn, we plainly find
Marks of God's image stamp'd upon the mind,

Glowing impatient for superior flight,
And perfect knowledge, in the realms of light !
Alone and fallen, hope of bliss were vain,
And human life a thorny path of pain,
Did not that Power which made, console mankind,
And man with man in kindred feelings bind,
Cheerless our state, and, doomed alone to stray,
Slight were the sunshine in our weary way !

Ah ! no, He doomed not man to live alone,
To sigh unpitied, and unheeded groan ;
But, formed for happiness and social ends,
Children, and wife, and sympathizing friends,
He touched his heart with warmth of holy love,
And sparks of friendship lighted from above !

When Life's full tide in angry fury flows,
These social feelings all their force oppose,
Give to our shattered bark, by storms opprest,
A waveless haven of unruffled rest ;

Tho' threatening storms pursue, with dismal gloom,
The new-born infant to the distant tomb,
Oft a sweet ray of ruddy light appears,
And wakes a smile 'midst bitterness of tears ;
Thro' Life's long scenes, our greatest bliss we find
From hearts united and a kindred mind.

Yon infant group of laughing infants see,
The playful romp, the blithe and social glee ;
Or mimic nurses, in fantastic dress,
Deck the loved doll, and give the fond caress ;
In social circle sit, and gaily spread
The broken glass, the gaudy china-shred ;
The polished dishes in long order shine,
Dinner, and rich desert, and sparkling wine !
The banquet done, the table now withdrawn,
They scamper lightly o'er the velvet lawn,
With tiny footsteps print the velvet green,
Giving fresh beauty to the loveliest scene.

Who sees not here God's all-directing will? (*a*)
Sucklings and babes the social end fulfil;
He guides the infant in his frolic play,
Collects the group and points the sunny way,
Where Love and Innocence their steps beguile,
Tint the warm cheek and wake the dimpled smile.

As infant years, in silent lapse, advance,
And, light of heart, they lead the mazy dance,
The social feeling still exerts its power,
And seeks the pleasure of the long-wished hour,
When equal friends, from crabbed lesson free,
Lilly's dry page, or puzzling Rule of Three!
Assemble gladly to the music's sound,
While the sly trick and artless laugh go round;
With gay delight each little bosom swells,
The sparkling eye the joyous feeling tells,
Friendship and love commence their lasting reign,
And future suffering loses half its pain,

When fond remembrance tells when bliss began,
The social infant now the social man.

Much-envied age, when every coming day
Brought a new pleasure, and the setting ray
Of every sun beheld our pastimes end
In easy converse with the chosen friend ;

When e'en the school-hour a warm welcome found,
And brought no terror with its frequent sound.

In school we sat, on social study bent,
On ancient lore and classic page intent ;
And oft, when labour done, in stolen play
Beguiled the hour, and talked the time away ;
'Till listening classes round the master stood, (*b*)
Holding sweet converse with the wise and good ;
Hung on his lips, and rich instruction caught,
Lessons with deep and solid learning fraught ;
Parental kindness beaming in his eye,
Checked wandering thoughts, and bade reluctance fly ;

At his mild censure flowed the ingenuous tear,
His praise reward, his frown our only fear.
Released from school, to sportive scenes we hied ;
On thy smooth bosom oft the oar we plied,
Soft flowing Ex ! along whose well-known banks
E'en yet I seem to see the school-boy pranks ;
In memory yet the swimmer's sports revive,
The daring plunge, the oft-repeated dive ;
Not yet forgotten the well-trodden green,
In later days, with pensive sadness, seen,
For many a day had past, and many a tear
Furrowed my cheek, since first I frolicked there !
In distant scenes, Life's varied woes I found,
In distant scenes, when changing Fortune frowned,
Thro' darkened clouds I saw some sunny rays,
From fond remembrance of those happy days,
When early friends, with social spirits blest,
Cheered my glad morn of life, and warmed my tranquil breast. (c)

And now, when Time has silvered o'er my head,
And half those friends, so dearly loved, are dead ;
When solemn warnings speak approaching rest
From all the tumults of an anguished breast,
Still sweet remembrance fondly loves to tell
Of early friends, and those I loved so well !

When college studies claim our riper age,
Science and learning ope a wider page,
We carry with us the same social mind,
From the same source our purest pleasures find ;
Congenial objects fill the active hour,
And friendly rivals strain the mental power
To vie with worthies of the olden day,
And catch from science the celestial ray,
Which to the first Great Cause conducts the youth,
Dispels cold doubt, and strengthens holy truth.

Oh say, if kindred minds refuse their praise,
Would the pale student pass his toilsome days

And sleepless nights in musings with the dead,
While deep reflection racks his aching head ;
Pursue, in silent, solitary pace,
God's wond'rous ways, with patient ardour trace,
The slow advancement of man's mighty skill,
Climb, undismayed, the steep and craggy hill
Of science such as filled a Newton's mind,
How earths revolve, and worlds their courses find? (*d*)

In vain the poet spreads the glowing page,
In vain historians mark the distant age,
Unheard the eloquence of Tully's tongue,
Unheard the music, if a Homer sung,
If the lone student seek, in vain, to find
The social feelings of a kindred mind.

Why starts the tear and heaves the deep-drawn sigh,
Whene'er that speaking picture meets his eye?
Why hang, with mute affection, o'er that face?
Why, so intent, those oft-seen features trace?

That speaking picture to his bosom tells
Of social scenes, where a loved mother dwells ;
Tells of his friends and home, now far away,
Where his first childhood fondly loved to stray ;
And even now, when all those scenes are fled,
And throbs, in solitude, his aching head,
He fondly hopes, when lonely studies cease,
For social pleasures and domestic peace.

Soon active life its thorny path displays,
Its agitations, its tempestuous ways ;
Clouds intervene across the smiling sky,
When most we think the summer sun-beam nigh.
Soon, soon the furrowed brow and care-worn cheek
Life's thousand woes and hard privations speak ;
Full is our cup of sorrow, and despair
Of all that life bestows seems but our bitter share !

Where turns the sufferer to find relief ?
Oh say, is solitude a cure for grief ?

When that full breast with fresh affliction swells,
And that sunk eye of recent anguish tells,
Fly, fly the solitude of woe, and rest
Thy load of sorrows on the feeling breast,
Life's social scenes and soothing friendships seek,
They dry the tear and smooth the furrowed cheek.

Where the broad oak its aged branches throws,
A silver stream, in seeming sorrow, flows,
Modest and meek, as shunning vulgar eyes,
There oft the musing lover sits and sighs ;
In silence hangs o'er that sequestered stream,
Rapt in the visions of the loveliest dream
Of future bliss, when freed from all alarms,
He clasps his Laura in his faithful arms.
Now seeks he far from wonted scenes to rove,
To breathe, in solitude, his secret love,
Unheard, unseen, he courts the forest's glade,
What time the evening throws her lengthened shade.

Soft is the music of that pensive stream,
Soft on its bosom sleeps the moon's pale beam ;
O'er every sense a calm emotion steals,
Wakes a fond wish to tell of all he feels,
Whispers of pleasure past, when first he hung
In breathless silence on his Laura's tongue.

To this lone spot the pensive lover flies,
But, e'en in solitude, for scenes he sighs,
Where social virtues, social bliss combine,
And sportive loves a rosy wreath entwine.
His Laura smiles, his fondest wishes true,
And real now the picture which he drew.

No more he flies to solitary dells,
Nor to the pale moon now his sorrow tells ;
Unheeded flows that once-beloved stream,
Where, oft reclined, he saw, in fancy's dream,
The brightest visions of a lover's mind,
And heard sweet voices in the passing wind.

Of love and Laura unseen spirits spoke,
Delightful thoughts of fairy hope awoke,
Told him of social scenes and wedded love,
The first, the purest blessing from above !

Turn to the varied bliss which God bestows,
Youth's active joys, old Age's calm repose ;
For many a sunny spot, in life's long day,
Receives the weary pilgrim in his way ;
Soothes many a sorrow in his troubled breast,
And points the sunshine of eternal rest.

Those cheering looks which unchang'd love bespeak,
That modest glow which mantles in the cheek
Of her we love, our greatest bliss impart,
And twine most strongly round our willing heart.
If our light bark proceeds with easy sails,
Wafted by halcyon airs and prosperous gales ;
If the sun rises to renew'd delight,
And sets, with gladness, in the shades of night ;

If health and innocence our steps attend,
We seek the sympathy of that lov'd friend ;
If lowering clouds conceal the azure sky,
And angry storms proclaim our danger nigh ;
By sickness harassed, or by cares oppress,
We fly for shelter to her tender breast ;
She soothes the anguish of our fevered brain,
And blunts the arrows of tormenting pain,
O'er the sad day a cheering comfort throws,
And hulls our midnight watchings to repose.

Unmixed delight the happy parent charms,
When infant cherubs throw their little arms
Around his neck, and give the rosy kiss,
Oh say, has solitude a joy like this ?

Let the lone pedant boast his useless skill,
With learned lore his unread pages fill ;
Contract the charities of life, and close
His heart to feeling for another's woes ;

Turn from the smile of welcome, and the eye
That speaks of love and social converse nigh ;
Whilst he, to love and fond affection given,
Lifts his whole soul in gratitude to Heaven,
When his dear children clustering climb his knee,
Health in their cheeks, and hearts elate with glee ! (e)

Around the heart domestic feelings wind,
Enlarge, exalt, and harmonize the mind,
Prepare for friendship's true and calm delight,
And man with man in holy league unite.
The sacred fervour spreads its influence wide,
Like to the vast embrace of ocean's tide,
Which flows resistless to a distant shore,
But sees again the land it left before.

Hence springs benevolence to all mankind,
True warmth of heart, the generous flow of mind ;
We steer our course where foreign breezes blow,
Seek other customs, other arts to know ;

Collective wisdom of the world compare,
Improve our own, and new-felt ardour share.
Freed from the prejudice of early youth,
See the mind's workings, in the light of truth,
And give to lands, where arts are yet unknown,
Superior knowledge which exalts our own.

Hence too fair Freedom waves her golden wings
O'er the wide earth, and kindred feeling brings,
Proclaims her sacred cause to all around,
And distant nations hail the welcome sound
Of justice, which unites in one accord
King and the priest, the peasant and the lord ;
The social compact, which in union binds
The struggling chaos of contending minds ;
In even course man's rival passions run,
As circling planets round the ruling sun ;
Checked by firm equity and righteous sway,
The tyrant's ruthless march or people's lawless way.

She to loved Albion's fair and sea-girt isle,
Gave the first token of her earliest smile ;
From her white cliffs commenced her glorious flight,
In all the splendour of celestial light ;
Shook the stern tyrant from his blood-stained throne,
Bade him man's rights, and equal justice own ;
Took from the slave Oppression's galling chain,
And made his bosom feel the manly thought again.

Hence too the traveller foreign danger braves,
And gallant vessels seek the distant waves ;
For Indian coasts the outstretched canvas spread,
Breast the wild waves, thro' trackless ocean led ;
Enlarge the produce of each varying soil,
And find the recompence of patient toil.
O'er the wide earth with ceaseless haste we roam,
To swell the comforts of our native home ;
Search every clime for scenes that glad the eye,
Charm every sense, and native wants supply ;

Nature's great wonders, in new worlds, explore,
The pathless forest, the vast water's roar ;
The mountain's dizzy height, with awe, survey,
Where the loud thunders roar and lightnings play ;
The fierce volcano pours its torrent wide,
In flaming fury, down its molten side ;
Earth's caverned wonders, and the crumbling tower,
And all the changes of Time's passing hour.

Curious we view the features of man's mind,
Trace the changed thought, see varied passions wind
Around the heart, as clime and manners change,
Europe's soft seats of art, or Afric's wildest range.

We homeward bring, by wise experience taught,
The judgment ripened, and the chastened thought ;
Corrected feelings of the scenes of life,
Its untrue pleasures and its jarring strife,
The little jealousies that men divide,
The mist of prejudice, the pomp of pride ;

And, as the traveller climbs the mountain high,
More brilliant prospects open to his eye,
So more extended views of life we find,
As wider spreads the horizon of the mind.

We turn to home, where welcome friendship smiles,
And cheerful converse many an hour beguiles ;
The playful sport, the unoffending joke
Excite no anger, and no fray provoke. (*f*)
The Poet's page and heaven-inspired song,
" All that to genius and to wit belong ;"
High deeds of glory, told in lofty rhyme,
And fairy visions of the olden time,
Or tender thoughts that speak of sorrow near,
Raise the full breast, and wake the willing tear,
When here made vocal, at the evening fire,
The kindred glow, the social joy inspire.

Storms are abroad, and Winter holds his sway
O'er nature's scenes, and short the gloomy day ;

To smiling hearth, where sparkling faggots burn,
To fire-side chair and home delights we turn ;
Our own loved circle, and the well-known guest,
Mirth in the eye, and sunshine in the breast,
Close round the hearth, and talk the time away
Of deeds long past, in Time's far distant day ;
Of early scenes, when Christmas time drew near,
We hourly watched the slow-departing year ;
Chide the dull moments as they glided by,
And dashed the tear-drop from the sparkling eye,
To think how soon a parent's kiss to share,
A father's blessing, a fond mother's prayer.

What hour so dear, when social winters call
Within the warm and hospitable hall ?
When ready welcome every guest partakes,
And gay good-nature each fond wish awakes.
The grey-haired grandsire sees around him stand,
Joyous and light of heart, a youthful band ;

They o'er their festive sports in order run,
Their playful pastime, and their school-boy fun;
Recount their games, and he has played them all,
The manly cricket, and the flying ball;
Tell him of famed events in days of yore,
And wondrous tales, which he has told before;
Paint every simple scene of early youth,
In all the colours of unvarnished truth,
'Till tears of gladness fill the old man's eye,
To see these pledges of affection nigh;
He hears the story of their cloudless day,
'Till age forgets how time has flown away,
Lives o'er the past, and feels again the power
Of buoyant spirits in the spring-time hour.
The social board, without profusion decked,
No prudent mirth, or cheerful spirits checked;
Whilst all to chaste and mild politeness true,
Freedom of converse, with good sense pursue,

Give to the King and friends a toast of love,
Nor blush to ask a blessing from above.

Oft from the social scene we turn aside,
For calmer thoughts, at pensive even-tide ;
To hazel copse or flower-bespangled vale,
And catch the fragrance of the whispering gale ;
Whilst o'er the tranquil mind reflection steals,
And every sense the soothing pleasure feels ;
We pause and think how good the Power above,
How vast the mercy of redeeming love.
Each flower that glitters to the charmed eye,
Each cloud that passes in the golden sky,
The leaf that quivers to the murmuring breeze,
The hum of insect 'mid the vernal trees,
And that rich melody of warbled song,
By blackbird poured the echoing vale along,
O'er the rapt soul a sweet enjoyment cast,
And calm remembrance of affliction past ;

Delightful pause to Life's more busy scene,
Like mellow tint resplendent lights between ;
Still, still we look to lovelier visions nigh,
To Life's bright prospects, and man's sympathy.

Search every region of Earth's wide domain,
Where most refined or savage manners reign,
From Zembla's snows to Afric's burning sands,
The social feeling every heart expands,
Man to his fellow man in union draws,
Subject alike to God's primeval laws.

'Mid the wild ocean seek the distant isle,
Where, half the year, no suns or summers smile ;
Go to the frozen North, where wintry winds
In ice and darkness the sad region binds ;
Ask the poor savage of the wildest shore,
Where 'mid the foaming surge and tempest's roar,
He seeks, in patience, his precarious meal,
If he forget, in that rough hour, to feel

How great the solace of his home and friends,
And full the joy which social life attends.

That social habits, when refined, increase,
Turn to the softer clime of ancient Greece.
There, 'mid the daily pomp and splendour, see
The gorgeous games, the glad festivity ;

All quit their homes the joyous scene to share,
Join the gay throng, and then forget their care ;
But when the hostile States appeal to war,
And angry Discord spreads her banners far,
Danger and dread Dismay appal the land,
See the pale mother, in distraction, stand,
She finds in every chief a deadly foe,
And gives, in wild despair, her bosom to the blow !

Yet in the field soft feelings still are nigh,
To calm the warrior's breast and flashing eye,
Sheathed is the sword, War's vengeful horrors cease,
And kindred voices claim the pause of peace !

All yield submissive to the soothing power,
All turn delighted to the festive hour,
When distant foemen drop the bloody steel,
Smoother the fierce brow, and learn again to feel.
Thro' the long ranks proceeds the welcome sound,
“Truce to the battle's din,” and all around
To glorious scenes of proud parade advance,
The splendid pageant, and the graceful dance;
In the vast theatre see thousands rise,
While thundering plaudits rend the echoing skies.
See jealous rivals, in firm union, met,
Close their past feuds, and mutual hate forget. (*g*)

Such is the magic, which so strongly ties
Man to his fellow in sweet sympathies!
Domestic feelings play around his heart,
E'en when the battle rages, and impart
A ray of hope to every wearied breast,
For homefelt pleasures and domestic rest.

When o'er the troubled ocean thunders roll,
What arms the mariner's unconquered soul?
Darkness and gloom, with all their terrors nigh,
And mountain-billows threat the angry sky;
The tempest rages, winds tempestuous roar,
Now drifts the vessel to the fatal shore!
Unknown dismay or feelings of despair,
But all is vigorous exertion there.
Tho' Death approaches in the coming wave,
Unmoved, unchanged the bosom of the brave!

In scenes, like these, again we clearly see
The mighty force of human sympathy.
Dangers increase, and full our cup of woe,
But slight the wound, when others feel the blow.

Within those walls, where gloom and silence reign,
Save the low murmurs of consuming pain,
See the pale prisoner oft, in anguish, cast
A lingering look on social pleasures past;

Desponding tenant of a living tomb !
How sinks thy heart amid the lonely gloom !
No voice of friends is heard, but all around
Gives but the echo of thy deep groan's sound !

From sleep disturbed and terrors of the night,
When visions trouble, and dread dreams affright,
He wakes again, to heave the earnest sigh
For one sweet hour of converse ere he die !
Vain, vain the wish, unchanged the stern decree,
Long as that heart shall beat, no more to see
Kindred, and friends, and all he loved so dear,
That hopeless wretch shall wake, tho' long he linger
here !

As o'er the scanty space he turns his eye,
And seeks some living object to descry,
To change the tenour of unvaried day,
And wile the moments of his life away,
O'er the damp surface of his prison wall,
He gladly sees a loathsome spider crawl ; (*h*)

And gives, whilst Hope's last ray illumines his breast,
A joyous welcome to his insect guest ;
For long despair a dismal gloom had spread,
To think that all around to him was dead !
To think that ere yon all-encircling sun
His mid-day course, in glorious state, has run,
How vast the multitudes which hail his light,
And glow with social love and gay delight ;
Whilst he, where solitude and darkness dwell,
Lives the sole tenant of a silent cell !

So, when the seaman, on some lone isle tost,
Ship and loved messmates in the wild waves lost,
Finds nought on which to rest his gazing eye,
Save Ocean's wide expanse, and lowering sky.
He climbs the lofty clift or towering hill,
Whilst thoughts of home his anxious bosom fill ;
But not a speck is seen, no hopes avail,
He sees no bark approach, no welcome sail,

But all is silence, save the sullen roar
Of the hoarse wave that beats the untrod shore.
Oh ! what a blank in life ! what sorrows rise,
As the last hope in that cold bosom dies !
Still his strained eye is fixed in wild despair,
Still, still he pours the agonizing prayer,
Once more to hear the voice of long-lost friend,
Ere all is past, and life's sad sorrows end !

Where Superstition, blind to Gospel love,
And deaf to gracious tidings from above,
As if in heathen darkness wandering still,
Rejects high Heaven's command and holy will,
Which peace proclaimed on earth, good-will to man,
When to the Holy Child the shepherds ran ;
He, bright example of the truths he taught,
Reproved the selfish, solitary thought,
Bade all the charities of life to flow,
In active aid to soothe another's woe.

The cloistered arch and grated window view,
Ask if that cold, relentless faith be true,
Which teaches man from social life to fly,
Like the proud Levite, sternly passing by
A wounded brother, in the stormy day,
Nor stops to wipe one bitter tear away.
He, who, in mercy, came mankind to save
From sin, and death, and terrors of the grave,
Taught not seclusion from the various strife
And man's deep suffering in the vale of life ;
Taught not devotion which, in formal prayer,
Breathes but the frenzied accents of despair,
Nor turns to Heaven that female's languid eye
Whilst sorrowing sisters weep, in anguish, by.
She, the pale victim of mistaken zeal,
When first her youthful bosom knew to feel,
Bright as the morning star, began the day,
And, at the coming of the golden ray

Of that grand orb, which wakes the world to love,
Hailed the sweet mercies of her God above.

Now to the sullen sound of cloister bell,
Wakes but to weep, and daily sorrows tell;
Recalls the promise made, the solemn vow,
Then half-extorted, oft-lamented now !
Thro' the long aisle, by yon dim taper's light,
Turns she to pray, in solemn hour of night;
In broken murmurs her sad prayer dies,
Unbidden thoughts of former scenes arise,
Contrast the death-like silence of the tomb,
The low-roofed chapel, and the damp cell's gloom
With Heaven's bright sky, and brilliant pomp of day,
O'er flowery meads or dew-bespangled way,
When, light of heart, with loved companions by,
Health tinged her cheek and sparkled in her eye.

Ah ! why to youth and innocence denied,
The balm of Spring, or Summer's purple pride !

Autumn's rich harvest clothes the golden fields,
And social Winter many a pastime yields;
Free as the frolic air, we rove around
The mountain's side, and catch the liquid sound
Of Nature's music, in the morn of day,
And to great Nature's God the grateful homage pay.
Fountain of social bliss! thy mercies rise
Wide as the earth, and boundless as the skies!
Ungrateful man rejects the gracious love,
Which thy blest Son, descending from above,
Gave to the poorest pilgrim of the earth,
And changed his moan of woe to peaceful mirth,
Raised soft emotions in his willing breast,
Love's purest sunshine, and Life's social rest.

Yet o'er the human mind what errors steal,
Man shuts his heart, and will not learn to feel;
Sickly and pale from penitence and prayer,
And many a bitter pang of cold despair,

See the poor monk oft turn a tearful eye
For peace and rest beneath the starry sky;
Shut out from all that social life can give,
Gloomy and sad, in dreadful silence live,
And as a grief-worn brother passes by,
Points to the ready grave for him who next shall die. (*i*)

Oh! rather seek the sick man's painful bed,
Ere yet the feverous plague increase its dead;
Go, where infection breathes its venom wide,
'Mid sultry suns, and ocean's sluggish tide;
The festering carcase here unburied lies,
Hark to the dying groans and feeble cries
Of many a wretch, forsaken and forlorn,
Whose unclosed eye shall fix, nor see another morn!

Go, where the "Sisters" lead the dangerous way,
Where stalks the Pestilence in still noon-day;
With fearless steps, to foreign lands repair,
Pour the soft balm of comfort on despair,

Snatch wandering outcasts from the yawning grave,
Their sole, best recompence, the hope to save! (*k*)
These are thy triumphs, Mercy, this thy joy!
Pure, hallowed victories, without alloy
Of vain ambition, pride, or worldly gain,
To dry one bitter tear, or soothe one bitter pain.

Long as humanity shall find a friend,
And listening angels from the skies shall bend
O'er deeds of mercy in this world below,
The sigh of feeling for another's woe,
In history's page shall live the deed divine,
Subject of solemn song and Poet's deathless line.

In God's own image formed, man learns to know
His various duties, in this scene of woe,
And humbly turns to God's high throne to pray
For strength to follow where He leads the way.
His patient mercy o'er the wide world spread,
His generous bounty o'er all nature shed,

That inward comfort which affliction feels,
That holy peace which o'er the bosom steals,
That ray of hope which gilds the closing eye,
Calming the sting of death, when good men die.
All teach mankind a brother's pain to share,
Themselves God's image and his constant care.

Turn to the holy Book, its precepts call
For mutual aid and charity to all.
They speak of mercy, mild as dew of eve,
Cheerful, and calm, and active to relieve,
Of meek compassion for a brother's woe,
Of social kindness, of the heart's warm glow.
He, who from God's high throne, in mercy, came,
Gave the great sanction of his hallowed name
To that benevolence which seeks distress
In dark abodes of Life's lone wilderness. (1)
In that sad school how many virtues taught,
And man's best feelings into action brought.

We cast our eyes o'er Life's extended way,
See the great conflicts in the adverse day,
See pale affliction, want, and woe appear,
The orphan's helpless state, the widow's tear ;
O'er a lost child a parent weeps alone,
And drooping sickness pours the painful moan ;
Oft in the grated cell we pause and find
The fevered brain, the total wreck of mind !

These are the scenes that reach the hardest heart,
Soften our pride, and humble thoughts impart,
Give to our breast the warm, the generous glow,
Man's sweetest recompence in this world below,
Speak in mute eloquence, of social love,
Our own dependence on the Power above,
Teach us to think on grief our Master bore,
And walk the path which He has walked before.

That holy prayer He taught to all mankind,
Breathes social love and mercy ever kind ;

Where'er the Gospel sheds its genial ray,
Our heavenly Father teaches how to pray.
He bids the monarch of the proudest throne
With lowly poverty his kindred own.
Science and Learning bend the humble knee
With feeble Age and lisping Infancy.
Tho' in far distant climes we draw our birth,
And widely scattered o'er the peopled earth,
Thro' the vast circuit of its wildest range,
Where colour varies, and where manners change,
To God in heaven, with one consent, we fall,
And, low on earth, to Him "our Father" call.
Say, can the solitary hermit shew,
Why that meek sufferer bore man's load of woe?
Why, when on earth, the sweet endearment stole
Of sacred friendship o'er his tranquil soul?
Why, when the sorrowing women round him prest,
Whilst deep affliction tore his anguished breast,

As tho' his friend in death for ever slept,
Why, with a kindred grief, the holy "Jesus wept?" (*m*)

When He, in mercy, went his earthly way,
His word divine bade Nature's self obey;
Love was the object, social love the end,
To social love, to voice of weeping friend,
Death and the grave to life and light restored
The buried Lazarus to his friend and Lord!

The hour is come, his human suffering ends,
See, at his cross, his loved, his weeping friends;
Ere the last struggle o'er and parting sigh,
He to his mother turned affection's eye. (*n*)

Pattern of human life! 'tis thine to give
Lessons of love, example how to live.
Thy great precursor preached a mode austere,
Bitter repentance, and a task severe;
But you, in accents soft as mercy, spoke,
Light was your burden, easy was your yoke!

At your mild look presumption stood reproved,
Sin was rebuked, yet still the sinner loved !
O'er his weak faith a veil of pity cast,
Touched his frail heart, and pardoned all the past !

Ah ! why will man pursuits so foreign seek
To holy friendship and affection meek ?
Brief is life's span, its short enjoyments fade,
Ere the sun sets in Evening's placid shade !
The sweetest flower that sparkles to the eye
Must, with the winter storm, in paleness die ! (o)
Why, when his joys so few, so frail his life,
Will man pursue with deadly deeds of strife
The bloody path, o'er War's extended plain,
'Mid ghastly heaps of untold brethren slain !

Oh, dire effects of man's corrupting fall !
Entrance of Death, and enmity 'mid all !
The frail descendants of that fallen pair,
In God's own image formed, how blest and fair !

Soon followed murders, War's accursed trade,
And all the horrors, by transgression made !

In Eden's vales, ere yet the Tempter came,
And vice and sin were yet unknown by name ;
'Mid green retreats of amaranthine bowers,
Our guiltless parents past their tranquil hours.
As yet they heaved no sigh, they shed no tear,
But when they felt what happiness was near,
They blest the bounty of their God above,
And all was harmony, and all was love.

Too soon, alas ! they changed their happy lot,
Wished higher knowledge, and their God forgot,
Triumphant Malice saw its easy prey,
And Nature shuddered on that awful day,
When our first parents from obedience fell,
And gave to Eden's vales a long, a last farewell !

Hope still remained, and lingered o'er the hill,
Sole consolation in a world of ill.

Prophetic voices whispered, from above,
Blessings to come, a Saviour's dying love !
In distant clouds the blissful vision beamed,
Long years of peace, and sinful man redeemed.

Complete, O Heaven, the gracious work begun,
Give to all nations thy Eternal Son !
Humble high pride, and bend the stubborn heart,
Thy tender mercies to mankind impart,
'Till man with man in holy union joined,
Stamp'd with the impress of immortal mind,
A heavenly foretaste of that splendour see,
Which round thy throne, from all eternity,
In awful grandeur fills the glorious sky,
Whilst angels, with their golden harps on high,
Chant hallelujahs to their Maker's praise,
And solemn songs to Heaven's high glory raise !

Yes, in the human mind triumphant lives
The social hope, which its great Maker gives.

More tranquil thoughts the greater part employ,
Domestic rest, and homefelt scenes their joy.

They from the battle's din, to rest retire,

Seek the loved circle at the social fire ;

Go down the vale of life in tranquil peace,

And, with its lapse, their happiness increase.

Where the hill echoes to the sabbath-bell ;

How does its sound the calm enjoyment tell !

Oft thro' the beauteous vale I love to stray,

As on the village church the sun's bright ray

Glorious and glad, with golden radiance, smiles,

And many a wearied thought and woe beguiles.

Here, on the church-yard turf, I sit and shed

The tear of love for friend or father dead ;

A lingering look, in sweet remembrance, cast

O'er many a scene of social pleasures past ;

In mental vision lost endearments trace,

Hang once again on that benignant face,

Which smiled so often on my early days,
And think I hear a mother's fondest praise!

Yes! even here, by pensive musings led,
Amid the awful mansions of the dead,
The social feeling loves the frequent thought
On former days that social pleasure brought.
Tho' memory raises oft the tender sigh,
And tears of sorrow glisten in the eye,
To think how many a friend, for ever gone,
Moulders in silence, 'neath the grass-grown stone!
Yet, the heart softened feels a warmer glow,
To share a brother's joy, a brother's woe.

Cold is the heart that turns a careless eye
On that meek worshipper who passes by,
To join the holy man in social prayer,
Lift the full soul, for solemn rites prepare,
In blest communion with his friends around
Hear the glad tidings, and the gracious sound

Of that sweet voice which speaks of pardon near,
Hushed every sigh, and wiped away the tear.

Far from those walls, he often pours alone
To Heaven's high throne the deep, repentant groan ;
Low on the earth he sinks, in humble grief,
Turns to the Cross, for there is sure relief !

But when the sabbath-morn brings in the day,
Proclaiming rest, and social time to pray,
Warmed by the kindred glow of circling friends
With holy awe and meek devotion bends
To Him in heaven, who views, with equal eye,
The rich man's offering, and the poor man's sigh ;
Here the world's wealth, distinction's proud parade
Before his splendour, like the dead leaf, fade !

Far to the North, where Ocean holds its sway,
'Mid wildest waves and winter's gloomy day,
Stands a lone Isle, where Nature dwells in ire,
'Mid fields of ice, and spouting streams of fire !

Where the fierce whirlwinds oft in fury sweep
Shepherd, and mountain hut, and wandering sheep ;
Few scattered houses mark the trackless scene,
Few smiling faces cheer the waste between ;
Yet o'er their artless minds a solace steals,
Calming the frequent pang the lone heart feels ;
With the few partners of the gloomy day,
From social hours and friends when far away,
'Mid the loud whirlwind's roar, and mountain fire,
To turf-built hut and soothing hope retire ;
Some wandering pilgrim, o'er the wild waste borne,
May cheer their lonely thoughts and life forlorn !
As thus in hope these hardy peasants dwell,
They watch the welcome sound of sabbath bell ;
Then from their distant huts, at break of day,
Tend to the simple church their willing way.
That simple church, against the rude rock piled,
Hangs o'er the snow-clad hill and desert wild ;

From all around they press with hasty feet,
Their holy man with honest love to greet ;
Each from his lips the pious prayer receives,
And his heart shares the blessing which he gives.

How beat their hearts to meet a welcome smile
From distant brother of their ice-clad Isle !

Curious they seek occurrence rare or new,
And long their converse, tho' the subjects few,
Since last in church-yard union weekly met,
They strove a hope to raise, or painful thought forget ! (*p*)

Slow beats the pulse of life, and sunk the cheek,
Death's near approach, with sad forebodings, speak.
See the meek Christian, care and sorrow done,
And life's long path, with toilsome labour, run,
Low on his couch, in pain and sickness, lie,
His flight commencing to the peaceful sky ;
Tho' hope of pardon soothes his anxious mind,
He thinks of friends he soon must leave behind ;

They round his bed, with trembling accents, stand,
Watch his last look, and press his feeble hand ;
Join in his prayer for endless peace above,
And rest their hopes on His redeeming love,
Who casts a ray of comfort o'er the soul,
And points the path where ceaseless ages roll !

Yet, ere his eyes in death for ever close,
O'er his full heart love's soft endearment flows ;
Affliction cheers him, in the awful hour,
And long-tried friendship gives its soothing power,
Calms dark reflections that around him press,
On scenes for ever gone, and life's lost happiness !

Not so the exile, far from home and friends,
Unknown, unpitied, his long sorrow ends ;
Doubt and despair a shade of horror cast,
Proclaiming vengeance for his mis-deeds past,
Hide from his sight mild Mercy's angel form,
And bare his bosom to the inward storm

Of Conscience tracing the unhallowed thought,
And secret sins to sad remembrance brought.
Who bids him listen to the holy voice
Of Him who taught repentant sin rejoice ?
Who from his cold damp cheek will wipe the tear,
Stand by his side, and tranquillize his fear ;
Direct his soul an upward path to soar,
To reach the haven of a peaceful shore ?

From social love alone true comfort flows,
'Mid life's privations and its bitter woes ;
This bids our bosom brave the rudest storm,
And adverse fortune, in its sternest form ;
And, when the body sinks and spirits fail,
In meek submission, bids God's glories hail,
With fervent prayer and quick-departing breath,
Entrance to life thro' awful gates of death !

The hour is come ! and as the fig-tree casts
Untimely fruit, 'mid the wild whirlwind's blasts,

So to the earth the stars of heaven will fall,
Humble man's pride, and sternest hearts appal;
And, when on high God's mighty thunders roll,
The Earth itself will vanish as a scroll! (*q*)

Visions of bliss! from mortal eye concealed,
How vast the mercy of the God revealed!
His word gone forth, unnumbered nations stand
Around the throne, like Ocean's countless sand;
Receive his blessing, and, with grateful voice,
Hymn his high praise, and in his love rejoice.
Low at his feet, in holy awe, they kneel,
Whilst o'er their bosoms sweet affections steal;
Kindred and friends, no more divided, meet
Pure and unspotted, round the Mercy-seat!

Spirits of light! look down and deign to shed
One ray of heavenly hope around my head!
Touch my weak heart with Heaven's mysterious fire,
Wake the pure wish, and holy thoughts inspire,

In blest communion, sweetest counsel give,
Point the true path, and teach me how to live !

Oh ! might my humble wish forgiven fly,
And reach the secret mansions of the sky,
That now a father's wish, a mother's prayer,
Watched all my goings with a tender care,
Cheered my devotions, in the gloomy day
Of life's hard conflicts, and prepared the way
To peace, and pardon for transgression past,
Where sorrows end, and joys for ever last !

Saviour of men ! do thou my footsteps guide
Down life's descent, in all my wanderings wide !
On thy true faith, O teach my soul to rest,
And shed a sunshine on my troubled breast ;
Whilst the warm blood still moves my aching heart,
Thy consolations and thy aid impart !
Give me the social friend, the kindred mind,
Responsive feelings, and affection kind ;

And when this lovely scene, which cheers the eye,
Like a faint vision, shall for ever fly ;
That beauteous sun no more its glories spread,
Nor the pale moon her softer radiance shed ;
When now no more to verdant hills I go,
Nor gaze with transport on the vales below ;
See Ocean's waves, in all their grandeur, roll,
Whilst all thy mercies fill my grateful soul ;
Then with the saints that stand around thy throne,
Tears wiped away, and every sorrow flown ; (r)
Place me with those I loved on earth so well,
How dearly loved, these aching eye-lids tell !
Bid me with them the loud hosanna raise,
And pass, in holy love, our everlasting days !

NOTES.

NOTES.



NOTE (a) Page 4.

"I seem, for my own part, to see the benevolence of the Deity more clearly in the pleasures of very young children, than in any thing in this world. The pleasures of grown persons may be reckoned partly of their own forming; but the pleasures of a healthy infant are so manifestly provided for by another, and the benevolence of the provision is so unquestionable, that every child I see at its sport affords to my mind a kind of sensible evidence of the finger of God and of the disposition which directs it." PALEY.

NOTE (b) Page 5.

I cannot refrain from expressing, in this place, my feelings of grateful remembrance of that learned and excellent man, the Rev. John Marshall, A.M., who, for more than thirty years, presided over the grammar school, at Exeter, with truly parental

kindness and dignified authority. He closed a long and useful life, beloved and lamented by all who knew him.

“ Quoad longissimè potest mens mea respicere spatium præteriti temporis, et pueritiæ memoriam recordari ultimam, inde usque repetens, hunc video mihi principem, et ad suseipiendam et ad ingrediendam rationem horum studiorum extitisse.”
CICERO.

NOTE (c) Page 6.

Even yet sounds in my ears my affectionate and emphatic farewell to my school-fellows, on leaving them for the last time :

“ O dulces comitum valete cœtus,
Longè quos simul a domo profectos,
Diversè variæ viæ reportant.”

CATULLUS.

NOTE (d) Page 8.

“ —quis enim Virtutem amplectitur ipsam,
Præmia si tollas ?”

JUVENAL.

NOTE (e) Page 14.

“ No man can tell but he that loves his children, how many delicious accents make a man's heart dance in the pretty conversation of those dear pledges ; their childishness, their stammering, their little angers, their innocence, their imperfections,

their necessities, are so many little emanations of joy and comfort to him that delights in their persons and society."

JEREMY TAYLOR.

NOTE (f) Page 18.

"Duplex omnino est jocandi genus: unum illiberale, petulans, flagitiosum, obscœnum; alterum elegans, urbanum, facetum." CICERO.

NOTE (g) Page 24.

The celebration of the public games, in ancient Greece, was exempt from hostilities, and the persons of the officiating priests were sacred and inviolable. A remarkable coincidence, in the manners of the inhabitants of the Marquesas, was observed by Capt. Krusenstern, from whose voyage round the world I have made the following extract:—

"The war is continued until one of the chiefs demands a truce for the purpose of celebrating a dance-feast (the Olympic games of these savages); they all agree upon a term, and all parties, friends as well as enemies, assist in the preparation; and, as a proof that these rude and blood-thirsty men take no pleasure in a continued state of warfare, but are occasionally glad to live in peace and security, they frequently prolong the time for making these preparations. Six months had elapsed since the last truce was proclaimed, and eight months more were

to pass before the feast, although the extent of the preparations is merely that of making a sort of platform, on which the dancing is to be performed. After the termination of the feast, they return home, and the war recommences in all its vigour."

NOTE (h) Page 26.

During the horrors of the French Revolution, this circumstance really occurred, with the cruel addition of a brutal gaoler's destroying the spider, from the presence of which he observed his miserable prisoner derive pleasure.

NOTE (i) Page 32.

Monks of the Order of La Trappe.

NOTE (k) Page 33.

In the year 1821, when the plague was so destructive at Barcelona, some "*Sœurs de Charité*" of the Order of St. Camille, went thither from Paris, to tend upon the sick, and to console them under their suffering. Though I have not introduced into the body of this little poem the names of the physicians who left Paris for the same benevolent purpose, I will here render justice to them, by mentioning doctors Mazet, (who died in Spain) Pariset, Bally, and François. The following extract from the "*Album*" may not be uninteresting :

"Cependant sur ces chemins déserts je vois s'avancer deux groupes téméraires.

Qui êtes-vous ? où portez-vous vos pas ?

Nous sommes des Soeurs de Charité.....

Et vous ?

Nous sommes des médecins du roi de France.

Qui vous dirige vers ces bords ?

L'ardeur de soulager nos frères.....

Et qu'esperez vous ?

Les sauver !"

In the course of the late war, great numbers of our sick and wounded soldiers were indebted to the pious offices of the Hospital nuns, who attended them with a kindness and assiduity beyond all praise. It is however to be lamented that these "Sisters" are not content to restrict their benevolent offices to the relief of bodily infirmities, when the sufferers do not profess the Roman Catholic religion. In this case they too often endeavour to make converts to their own faith.

NOTE (l) Page 34.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this ; to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction," &c.

NOTE (m) Page 37.

"When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled, and said, where have ye laid him ? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept." John xi. 33, &c.

NOTE (n) Page 37.

“When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son.” John xix. 26.

NOTE (o) Page 38.

————— ἐν δ' ολίγω
 Βροτῶν το τερπνὸν ἄνζεται : ἔτω
 Δὴ καὶ πιτνει χαμαι, ἀποτροπῶ
 Γνώμῃ σεσεισμένον :
 Ἐπαμεροι. τί δὲ τις ; τι δ' ἄτις ;
 Σκιᾶς ὄναρ ἄνθρωποι.

PIND.

“ ———festinat enim decurrere velox

Flosculus angustæ miseræque brevissima vitæ.”

JUV.

“ E la vita appunto un fiore
 Da goderne in su! mattino
 Sorge vago, ma vicino
 A qual sorgere è il cader.”

METAST.

NOTE (p) Page 45.

I have endeavoured to give a faint image of the following beautiful passage from Sir George Mackenzie's Travels in Iceland :

“The moral and religious habits of the people at large may be spoken of in terms of the most exalted commendation. In his domestic capacity the Icelander performs all the duties which his situation requires, or renders possible, and while, by the severe labour of his hands, he obtains a provision of food for his children, it is not less his care to convey to their minds the inheritance of knowledge and virtue. In his intercourse with those around him, his character displays the stamp of honour and integrity. His religious duties are performed with cheerfulness and punctuality; and this even amidst the numerous obstacles which are afforded by the nature of the country, and the climate under which he lives.

“The sabbath scene at an Icelandic church is indeed one of the most singular and interesting kind. The little edifice, constructed of wood and turf, is situated perhaps amid the rugged ruins of a stream of lava, or beneath mountains which are covered with never-melting snows, in a spot where the mind almost sinks under the silence and desolation of surrounding nature. Here the Icelanders assemble to perform the duties of religion. A group of male and female peasants may be seen gathered about the church, waiting the arrival of their pastor, all habited in their best attire, after the manner of the country; their children with them, and the horses, which brought them from their respective homes, grazing quietly around the little assembly. The arrival of a new comer is welcomed by every one with the kiss of salutation, and the pleasures of social intercourse, so rarely enjoyed by the Icelanders, are happily connected with the occasion which summons them to the discharge of their religious

duties. The priest makes his appearance among them as a friend ; he salutes, individually, each member of his flock, and stoops down to give his almost parental kiss to the little ones, who are to grow up under his pastoral charge. These offices of kindness performed, they all go together into the house of prayer."

NOTE (q) Page 48.

" And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll rolled together ; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places." Rev. vi. 13, 14.

NOTE (r) Page 50.

" And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are done away." Rev. xxi. 4.

THE END.

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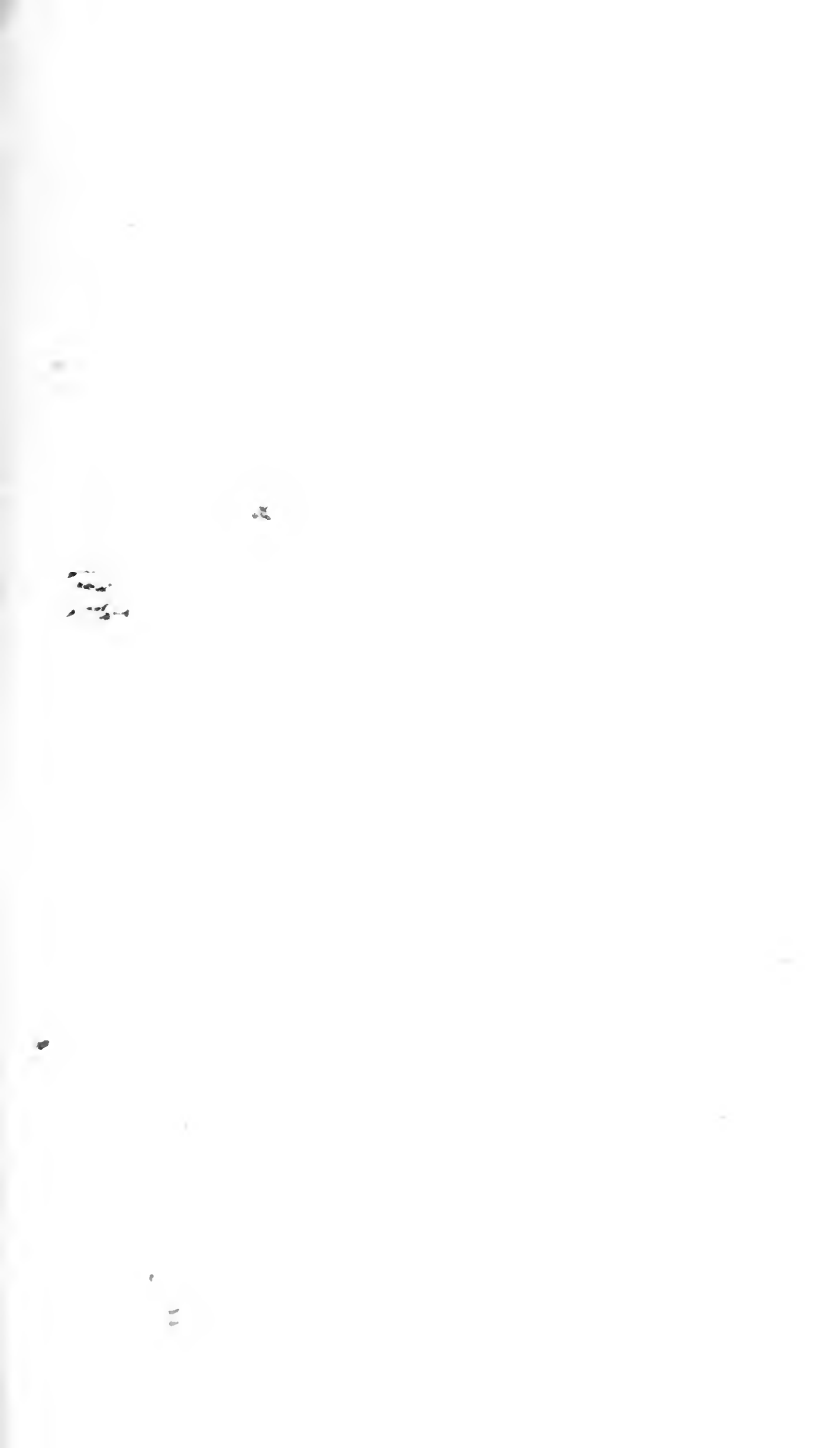
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